because of the inviolability of Question Hour. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is not yielding. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, one aspect is, suspension of Question Hour. *(Interruptions)*... You have already ruled on that. The other aspect relates to a discussion on what happened or what is happening in Bihar. *(Interruptions)*... What the Leader of the Opposition has stated is not a motion; it is his viewpoint. *(Interruptions)*... He is entitled to his viewpoint. *(Interruptions)*... If there is a motion in front of the House and if that motion is admitted by you, I can assure the House that the Government is quite ready for a discussion. *(Interruptions)*... But let there be a motion first, a motion that is admitted by you and time allotted for that motion. *(Interruptions)*... Once these three conditions are met, the Government would not fight shy of a discussion on this issue. *(Interruptions)*... On the aspect of suspension of Question Hour, you have already ruled. *(Interruptions)*... The procedure of Parliament must be gone through. *(Interruptions)*... There must be a proper motion and that must be admitted. *(Interruptions)*... that motion can be admitted only by you and subsequently time is allotted for it. *(Interruptions)*... We have no difficulty in discussing it. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 141. *(Interruptions)*...

श्री सुरेश पचौरी: सभापति महोदय, रूल 38 के तहत सस्पेंशन ऑफ क्वेश्चन ऑवर की मांग की गई है। ...(व्यवधान)... आप सदन का मत जान लीजिए।...(व्यवधान)...

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Steps to Contain Imports

*141. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:—

(a) whether it is a fact that since many items are now brought under OGL, the imports have been tremendously growing as compared to exports;

(b) if so, what is the rate of growth of imports during the last three years; and

(c) what steps are being proposed to contain this trend and bring unwanted imports under control?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) Restriction on import of 488 items were removed during 1996-97. Similarly restrictions were removed on 391 more items during 1998 and on 894 items during 1999.

The comparative data relating to imports during the year 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96, *i.e.* prior to the removal of the quantitative restrictions, and that relating to 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 *i.e.* after the removal of quantitative restrictions is given in the statement below:—

(Value in Rs. Crores)

Year	Exports Incl. re-exports	Imports	Trade Balance	Rate of growth of Exports	Rate of growth of Imports %
1993-94	69751	73101	-3350	39.9	15.3
1994-95	82674	89971	-7297	18.5	23.1
1995-96	106353	122678	-16325	28.6	36.4
1996-97	118817	138920	-20103	11.7	13.2
1997-98	130101	154176	-24075	9.5	11.0
1998-99(P)	141604	176099	-34495	8.8	14.2

It will be seen from this data that the freeing of imports during this period has not had any significant impact on the average rate of growth of imports. However, imports and exports are regularly monitored and corrective action is taken wherever necessary through suitable modifications in the customs duties.

Plight of HSCL

*142. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA PILLAI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had received a memorandum signed by 57 Members of Parliament about the plight of Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL);

(b) if so, what are the salient points by the MPs therein; and

(c) what steps Government have taken on each point raised in the memorandum?